

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 FEAE-00 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 OPIC-03 AID-05

AGR-05 STR-04 /089 W

----- 029933

R 301500Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3983

INFO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, ENRG, RW, UG

SUBJECT: UGANDA: AMIN SNUBS RWANDA ON PETROL CRISIS

REF: (A) NAIROBI 2010, (B) KINSHASA 2660 (NOTAL)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY - AMIN REFUSAL TO MATERIALLY ASSIST RWANDA
IN PETROL CRISIS HAS MAJOR ECONOMIC AND POSSIBLY POLITICAL
REPERCUSSIONS. END SUMMARY

2. ECONOMIC: KENYAN-UGANDA FRONTIER CLOSURE HAS HAD MAJOR
IMPACT ON RWANDA--PARTICULARLY POL PRODUCTS. WITH NO TANK
STORAGE, LAND-LOCKED RWANDA NEARLY COMPLETELY DEPENDENT ON
MOMBASA-KAMPALA LIFELINE. DELIVERIES SPORADIC EVEN UNDER
NORMAL CONDITIONS, BUT RWANDAN TRANSPORT AND POL-BASED
ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS TRUCK EXPORT COFFEE AND TEA, HAVE EITHER
STOPPED OR ARE WINDING DOWN. KIGALI'S FEW GAS STATIONS
MARKED BY BLOCKS-LONG LINES OF VEHICLES WHICH PARKED AND
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THEN LEFT FOR DAYS. BLACK MARKET GAS PRICE HAS SOARED
400 PERCENT OVER PAST WEEK. SMALL INPUT FROM BUJUMBURA HAS

REPORTEDLY STOPPED DUE GOB DECISION BUILD UP 90-DAY STOCK.

3. GOR DEL VISITS KAMPALA - IN EFFORT RETRIEVE SITUATION, RWANDAN MINFIN ACCOMPANIED BY GOV. NAT'L BANK FLEW KAMPALA MAR 17 WITH LTR FOR AMIN FROM PRES HABYARIMANA. EMB UNDERSTANDS AMIN REFUSED RECEIVE GOR DEL STATING (A) RWANDAN TRANSPORT TO BLAME FOR DETERIORATING RWANDAN ROADS; (B) RWANDAN ECONOMIC POLICIES RESPONSIBLE FOR CHEAPENING UGANDAN SHILLING (SURPRISINGLY, RWANDAN FRANC HAS BECOME RELATIVELY "HARD" CURRENCY FOR CENTRAL AFRICA); AND (C) CONTINUING RWANDAN PROCESSING/EXPORT OF SMUGGLED UGANDAN COFFEE. SOURCES ALSO STRESS AMIN PIQUED OVER HABYARIMANA MEETING WITH NYERERE LAST MONTH IN TANZANIA.

4. OUTLOOK - MINFIN RETURNED KIGALI MAR 24 STATING GAS PROBLEM "RESOLVED." ACCORDING EMB INFO THIS IS ANTI-HOARDING STATEMENT WITH QUESTIONABLE SUBSTANCE. IT APPEARS GOU MINFIN DID AGREE PERMIT 4 - 12 PETROL TRUCKS TO TRANSIT UGANDA TO RWANDA. THAT AMOUNT IS EQUAL TO ABOUT ONE WEEK RWANDAN CONSUMPTION AFTER TRUCKS ARRIVE--PRESUMABLY FROM MOMBASA. HOWEVER, PETROL TRUCKS REPORTEDLY UNAVAILABLE MOMBASA AND RWANDAN TRUCKS PROHIBITED USE KENYAN ROADS BECAUSE OF AXLE WEIGHTS. GOR CURRENTLY PURSUING EFFORT LOCATE KENYAN TRUCKS AND ARRANGE PETROL TRANSFER AT KENYAN-UGANDAN BORDER. EVEN IF TRUCKS AVAILABLE, UNENCUMBERED TRANSIT UGANDA WITH FULL PETROL TRUCK, EVEN WITH AMIN'S APPROVAL, WOULD NOT BE ENVIABLE TRIP. RWANDA RIVERS ALSO REPORTEDLY RECENTLY BAKED AT DRIVING TO KENYA THROUGH UGANDA ON GROUNDS NO MEALS AVAILABLE AND UGANDAN CUSTOMS OFFICIALS TAX/CONFISCATE EVEN THEIR SANDWICHES.

5. COMMENT: THIS TRAGI-COMIC SITUATION IS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC BLOW TO PRES HABYARIMANA WHO HAS DEVOTED A FAWNING AMOUNT OF ATTENTION TO AMIN IN VIEW UGANDAN ECONOMIC LEVERAGE OVER RWANDA AND PAST HISTORY BAD RELATIONS. RWANDAN FOREIGN POLICY SINCE 1973 HAS BEEN BASED IN FIRST INSTANCE ON GOOD RELATIONS RWANDA'S CONTIGUOUS NEIGHBORS. GOR ASSUMED THERE WOULD BE NO REPETITION OF EARLIER SITUATIONS WHEN AMIN CLOSED RWANDA-UGANDA BORDER. IF GAS SITUATION NOT EASED WITHIN RELATIVELY NEAR FUTURE, LATENT RWANDAN OPPOSITION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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WILL UNDOUBTEDLY SEEK DISCREDIT GOR PRES AS HAVING BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN MATTER OF RWANDA'S PRIMARY NATIONAL INTEREST. IT COULD ALSO PUT NEW POLITICAL EMPHASIS ON RECENTLY IMPROVED RWANDAN-TANZANIAN RELATIONS AND POSSIBLY HASTEN CONSTRUCTION MWANZA-RUSUMU ROAD LINK TO DAR ES SALAAM. FRITTS

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